

Free and Reduced Price Meal Application POINTS TO REMEMBER

The following information should also be noted concerning the Free and Reduced Price Meal Application and processing procedures. A supplemental Eligibility Guidance for School Meals Manual was mailed last year. For additional information on approving free and reduced price meal applications please refer to the Eligibility Guidance for School Meal Manual, August, 2001. This manual is on the United States Department of Agriculture web page: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Guidance/default.htm>. Please refer to these manuals when a question arises. Often times, a question can be resolved at the local level and a call to the State Agency is not needed. Questions can be directed to the State Agency at 515-281-4754 or patti.harding@ed.state.ia.us.

1. If a student is a member of a family covered by Food Stamps or the Family Investment Program (FIP) only the appropriate case number needs to be given. These families DO NOT have to fill out information for the household members, social security numbers, or income. An adult household member must still sign the application.
2. If a family does receive FIP, only those children receiving the benefit can be listed on the top of the application. If non-FIP children are living in the same household, they must be listed on a separate application.
3. Procedures for processing free and reduced price applications for self-employed persons showing farming income, proprietorship income, and/or partnership income is as follows:
 - Refer to the back side of the free and reduced meal application form to assist in calculating the amount of income to report. It is not required that the person applying provides a copy of their Form 1040.
 - The amount reported on the backside of the form is converted to a monthly amount and entered on the front side of the application form. If the applicant is engaged in more than one form of self-employment, there should be no duplication of amounts reported on line items. If the amount is negative it must be entered as zero on the front side.
 - If any members of the household are also salaried employees in some other line of work, the current gross salary for those persons must be entered on the front side of the application form. This must be current gross salary at the time the application is submitted.
 - If the school chooses to verify an application from a self-employed person, the school should then request a copy of the most recent 1040 Federal Income Tax form and if anyone in the household is salaried, request a current pay stub.
4. Before applications are processed for the school year, the SFA for a limited time may claim and be reimbursed for free and reduced price meals served to:
 - Children from households with approved applications on file from the previous year.
 - Children enrolling in school from households who were approved for benefits the previous year.
 - Previously approved children who transfer from one school to another school in the same school district.
 - For schools that participate in whole grade sharing, the free and reduced price application should be on file at the building where the student eats. If there are siblings in the family, the original may be kept on file at the building where it was submitted and a copy sent to the district the sibling is attending.

Applications from the prior year are valid for only 30 operating days after your district's/school's start date. Going on prior year approval is not standard operating procedure. Using last year's applications should only be done when there are too many applications to approve.

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5. The School Food Authority must have a valid application or direct certification letter from the Department of Human Services on file for each student receiving free or reduced price benefits. A valid application is one that is completed accurately and is correctly approved for the appropriate level of benefits. Incomplete applications cannot be approved. If required information is missing on applications, schools should return the application to the household or phone or write for further information.
6. Temporary approval: When zero income is reported on an application, the application should be temporarily approved for a limited time. The maximum time limit is 45 calendar days. At the end of the temporary approval period, the SFA should contact the household to determine if there has been a change in circumstances. If there has been no change, the SFA should document the date of the contact and extend the temporary approval. If the circumstances have changed, the household must reapply by using up-dated information. A new determination will then be made.
7. Student roster: A master list of students eligible for free or reduced price benefits shall be maintained for issuing tickets and updating eligibility status.
8. Confidentiality:
 - Members of the school staff are allowed access to the applications or names of the students on a need-to-know basis only.
 - Exceptions include Title I assessment, U.S. Department of Education officials collecting data for the National Assessment of Education Progress. (See Assurance Statements)
 - If a child is approved for free or reduced price meals and this information would benefit the child in other programs such as fee waivers; names can only be released by written permission from the parent through a waiver(Prototype IX is a sample waiver). **Other items may be added to this waiver release if wording is clear as to the specific purpose for which the information will be used and what is being released. Completion of the waiver of confidentiality by the parent/guardian allows school districts to release the stated information for the specific purpose listed. School districts choosing to use the "Application for Waiver of Confidentiality" may modify PrototypeIX for use with any programs for which parents might wish to waive their confidentiality. Remember, any items added must have a separate check box and must state specifically what is being released and for what purpose. Note: Prior to disclosing or using any information for purposes other than the program for which the information was obtained, the determining agency must enter into a written agreement with the entity requesting the information. Use the Title I pink assurance form as a prototype to develop an agreement with any entity that request waiver information. An agreement must be signed by both the determining agency and the receiving entity.**
 - Changes in the National School Lunch Act allow, without consent, limited disclosure of information about free and reduced price meal or free milk eligibility. The disclosure limitations apply to the following: Persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of the programs authorized under the National School Lunch Act. This includes the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). This means that program eligibility information collected for any one of the Child Nutrition Programs may be shared with another Child Nutrition Program, even if the programs are sponsored by different entities. For example, a public school may disclose information about children's free and reduced price school meal eligibility without parental consent, to a Summer Food Service Program administered by Parks and Recreation. It is recommended that you remind the receiving entity of the confidentiality of the information you are releasing.